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LETTER DATED 20 JANUARY 2000 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 19 January 2000, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

Annex

Letter dated 19 January 2000 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the monthly report on the operations of the Stabilization Force. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Council.

(Signed) George ROBERTSON

Enclosure

Monthly report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. Over the reporting period (13 November-12 December 1999), there were approximately 27,000 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia with contributions from all North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and from 15 non-NATO countries. Stabilization Force (SFOR) troops continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols, and operations across the SFOR area included area security, monitoring the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, monitoring the entity armed forces, conducting weapons storage site inspections and providing support to the international organizations in theatre. Over the period, combat aircraft flew for approximately 100 hours.

2. SFOR troops continued to monitor compliance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1160 (1998), prohibiting the transport of weapons into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with an intensified presence on the ground in order to enforce the embargo. No violations were reported.

3. SFOR continued to monitor the movement of controlled petroleum products into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by establishing traffic control points. No violations were reported.

4. Following requests by both the High Representative and the Independent Media Commission (IMC) on 25 November, SFOR conducted inspections of commercial broadcasting sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to ensure that information was being broadcast according to the agreed media code. SFOR's inspections, which were conducted in accordance with annex 10 of the Peace Agreement, were deemed necessary because of continued illegal broadcasting by the Croatian television station Erotel, despite a broadcasting ban imposed by IMC on 16 November.

5. At the end of November, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) removed 22 Bosnian officials from their posts because of their persistent obstruction of the Peace Agreement. SFOR troops were put on increased alert to ensure the necessary security for the international organizations concerned. No violent incidents were reported.

6. On 6 December 1999, SFOR troops provided security to the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia during its confiscation of weapons from warehouses belonging to the 3rd and 5th Bosnian Serb Army Corps near Zvornik, as part of its investigation into war crimes committed after the occupation of Srebrenica in 1995.

Cooperation and compliance by the Parties

7. Over the reporting period, the situation in the theatre remained stable, with the entities in substantial compliance with the military provisions of the

Peace Agreement. The demonstration in Multinational Division (MND) (South-East), which had been reported last month, continued throughout the reporting period, with Bosniac farmers from Gorazde demonstrating for their right to work their land in Kopaci, in the Republika Srpska. The number of demonstrators varied between 5 and 50. SFOR troops and Multinational Specialized Units monitored the situation. No violence was reported.

8. There were two freedom-of-movement violations over the reporting period, both in MND (North). In the first, on 15 November, demonstrators, mostly women, blocked a road near the town of Vozuca in protest at power cuts. The United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) and local police monitored the situation and established a bypass that restored freedom of movement. In the second such incident, on 17 November, approximately 250 people blocked a road near Brcko in protest at an unannounced tax rise on imported goods. There was no violence, and the protest ended the same day.

9. Over the reporting period, SFOR troops conducted a total of 250 military weapons storage site inspections: 60 Bosniac; 35 Bosnian Croat; 122 Bosnian Serb; and 33 Federation. No major instances of non-compliance were reported.

10. SFOR troops monitored 628 training and movement activities: 297 Bosniac; 91 Bosnian Croat; 209 Bosnian Serb; and 31 Federation. The training and movement ban on the Republika Srpska Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade remains in effect until further notice, as does the ban imposed on elements of the 3rd Bosnian Serb Army Corps on 27 February 1999 as a result of their involvement in the illegal transfer of weapons. The ban imposed on the 1st Bosnian Serb Army Corps (reported last month) was lifted on 30 November 1999.

11. Over the reporting period, 10 demining teams conducted 94 mine-clearing operations, removing 15 anti-personnel mines and 5 items of unexploded ordnance from 9,935 square metres of land. The Bosnian Serb Army's mine-destruction programme was completed by the deadline of 15 November, when the last remaining complete mines were destroyed.

Cooperation with international organizations

12. Within capabilities, and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in theatre, including the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), IPTF, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, OHR, OSCE and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

13. SFOR continues to play an active role in supporting OHR's efforts to establish joint institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM). At the SCMM meeting of 8 December, final plans were announced for achieving the 15 per cent defence reductions by the end of 1999. The weapons held by the 30 battalions to be disbanded will be stored centrally and subjected to joint monitoring and inspection by SFOR and the entity armed forces. A working group composed of representatives from SFOR, OSCE and the entity armed forces was established to verify that the 15 per cent reductions take place and to agree detailed plans for the storage of the weapons. The working group will also initiate work on a

further round of defence reductions for 2000. As far as the development of a common security policy is concerned, a "road map" outlining the way forward was agreed at the 8 December meeting, but final release of the document is pending.

Outlook

14. Isolated incidents of violence and intimidation are likely to continue in response to the return of refugees and displaced persons.

15. In line with the North Atlantic Council's October decision, the Stabilization Force Commander (COMSFOR) has begun to implement the SFOR restructuring plan, which calls for a gradual reduction in the size, role and profile of the force. Military presence will be provided in critical areas, as well as in identified and emerging hot spots, and focused military support will also be provided in areas deemed critical to civil implementation. SFOR restructuring will be accomplished in spring 2000.